

2017-2018 S.C. House Scorecard Key

1. **Superintendent of Education** – February 22, 2017. H. 3146. Passage of Joint Resolution to the Constitution. Vote #H91.

The SC Club for Growth has long pushed for sensible reforms to state government, including the appointment of cabinet-level agency heads by the Governor. By making the Superintendent of Education an appointed position, there will be a greater degree of accountability in education in South Carolina. The preferred vote was YES to passage. Fortunately, the House passed the Joint Resolution 87-24.

2. **Pension Reform #1** – February 28, 2017. H. 3726. Passage of Bill. Vote #H97.

“Ultimately, the money comes from taxpayers,” said the *Charleston Post and Courier* when describing the House’s “fix” of South Carolina’s failing pension system. Taxpayers already contribute over \$1 billion to the hemorrhaging program that paid some of the highest investment management fees in the nation while getting some of the lowest returns. This bill, and the corresponding vote to adopt the conference report amounted to an \$826 million annual tax hike on SC taxpayers. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the bill passed 99-14.

3. **Secretary of Transportation** – March 1, 2017. H. 3516. Table Amendment Number 9. Vote #H100.

During the legislature’s discussion of one of the largest tax increases in South Carolina history, some members sought to bring accountability to the process and offered an amendment that would make the Secretary of Transportation a cabinet-level position. While this would not totally remove the General Assembly’s politicization of road funding and repair, it would be a step in the right direction. The preferred vote was NO to tabling. Unfortunately, the bill was tabled 84-33.

4. **Gas Tax #1** – March 1, 2017. H. 3516. Passage of Bill. Vote # H103.

This bill increased the state’s gas tax by 10-cents-a-gallon and increased a number of other fees. All in, this bill raised taxes and fees on South Carolina drivers by \$600 million a year. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the bill passed 97-18.

5. **Electrology Practice Act** – March 29, 2017. H. 3450. Passage of Bill. Vote #H424.

H. 3450 seeks to grow government by creating the Electrology Licensure Committee. In addition, the bill seeks to create two new occupational licenses. In short, H.3450 limits the supplies of goods and services. The preferred vote was NO to passage. Unfortunately, the House passed the bill 94-10.

6. **Controlling Health Insurance** – April 4, 2017. H. 3809. Passage of Bill. Vote #H464.

This bill places more regulations on health insurance companies and furthers government intervention in the free market. The best thing government can do to help drive down healthcare cost is get out of the way, not continually pass more mandates. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the bill passed 64-38.

7. **A to F Grading** – April 5, 2017. H. 3969. Table Amendment Number 3. Vote #H473.

South Carolina's government-run education system is among the worst in the nation. To comply with a 2016 law requiring the creation of new standards for the educational opportunities of students, some lawmakers sought to institute an easily understandable grading system based on the traditional A-to-F scale we are all familiar with. This system would be direct and to the point. Some lawmakers thought the standard in which we grade our children was too harsh to grade government run schools. These lawmakers preferred ambiguous terms like "average" or "sufficient." Government, schools included, should be transparent and poor performing schools should not be able to hide behind unclear terms that don't adequately and explicitly state their performance. The preferred vote was NO to tabling. Unfortunately, the motion was tabled 72-39.

8. **Pension Reform #2** – April 5, 2017. H. 3726. Adopt Conference Report. Vote #H475.

This bill did nothing to fix South Carolina's broken pension system. Instead, it threw good money after bad by authorizing a YEARLY \$826 million tax increase on taxpayers. This is in addition to the BILLION dollar annual contribution taxpayers make to support the fledgling fund. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the House adopted the conference report 105-1.

9. **Joint Election for Governor and Lieutenant Governor** – May 2, 2017. S. 0107. Passage of Bill. Vote #570.

Over half the United States jointly elect the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. The South Carolina Club for Growth supports this bill, that became law, for a number of reasons – continuity in government and accountability in government being at the top of the list. The preferred vote was YES. Fortunately, the bill passed 86-12.

10. **Gas Tax #2** – May 9, 2017. H. 3516. To Adopt the Conference Report. Vote #620.

Among other taxes and fees, this bill increased the gas tax by 12 cents, increased the vehicle sales tax, nearly doubled the vehicle registration fee, increased the tax cap on recreational vehicles, and created a new fee on fuel-efficient cars. Simply put, this bill amounted to one of the largest tax increases in South Carolina history. But, perhaps the most disappointing thing about this bill is that it will do little to fix our roads because the monies collected can be used on bond debt. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the House adopted the conference report 99-20.

11. **Gas Tax Money Redirect** – January 9, 2018. H. 3720. To Override Veto 5. Vote #H714.

In May 2017, the General Assembly voted to override Governor McMaster's veto of the largest tax increase in state history, an increase in the gas tax. In the 2017-2018 budget, the General Assembly inserted Proviso 84.12 which would have redirected gas tax funds away from road paving and maintenance to sidewalk beautification, landscaping, and other low (or no) priority projects.

The SC Club for Growth opposed the gas tax and during the debate legislators in favor of increasing the price at the pump insisted all funds collected would be spent directly on road maintenance and construction. Clearly this proviso is in direct contrast with what many elected officials claimed.

The SC Club for Growth realizes that the gas tax was increased despite objections from limited government advocates. We believe funds collected via the gas tax should only be spent on what they were collected for – road maintenance and construction.

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Fortunately, the House voted to sustain the Governor's veto by a vote of 25-85.

12. Government Meddling – January 9, 2018. H. 3720. To Override Veto 12. Vote #H720.

In his veto message, Governor McMaster stated Proviso 84.16 “places government in the middle of relationships between private employers and employees.” Specifically, the proviso called for the Department of Transportation to “insert itself into its vendor payroll practices and impose arbitrary schedules on private businesses.” The SC Club for Growth believes less regulation, not more, is essential to economic growth. While this proviso may be well intentioned, it sets a bad precedent that could lead to more government interface in the private sector.

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor's veto by a vote of 76-35.

13. Private Museum Pork – January 9, 2018. H. 3720. To Override Veto 29. Vote #H733.

Proviso 49.18 sought to revise the terms of earmarked pork from 2015. The original proviso called for a 3:1 match requirement associated with the appropriation of \$250,000 in non-recurring funds to renovate the Horry County Museum for multipurpose space. Local Horry County governments could not raise enough private funds to meet the required match and the General Assembly inserted proviso 49.18 to redefine the terms.

Additionally, the Horry County Museum is a private organization that should be exclusively supported by private funds. While the museum may be a worthy cause, it is not a core function of government. Governor McMaster vetoed Proviso 49.18 and called for the money to be returned to the state and used for critical needs. The SC Club for Growth concurred with the Governor and supported his veto.

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor’s veto by a vote of 86-22.

14. Taxpayer-Funded Lobbyist – March 13, 2019. H. 4950. Table Amendment #26. Vote #H1116.

Representative Jonathon Hill (R-Anderson) introduced Amendment #26 to H. 4950 seeking to strengthen protections against taxpayer funded lobbying. Specifically, the amendment would have prohibited all state agencies and institutions from using state fund appropriations to compensate employees who engage in lobbying on behalf of the state agency or institution. The amendment would have additionally required state agencies and institutions that report lobbying activities to gain certification from the State Ethics Commission that the lobbying activities were not funded by state fund appropriations.

The SC Club for Growth opposes the use of taxpayer funds for lobbying activities.

The preferred vote was “nay” to tabling. Unfortunately, the House voted to table the amendment by a vote of 71-39.

15. Special Interest Power – April 10, 2018. H. 4421. Third Reading. Vote #H1245.

Advocates for loosening the grip of South Carolina’s traditional energy monopolies won some hard-fought State House votes in early 2018 but were stopped cold when those energy companies opposed H. 4421 on third reading. The bill would have lifted the so called “net-metering” cap allowing solar energy companies to expand through competition with the monopoly energy companies.

Bills are rarely killed on third reading, and it speaks to the energy companies’ furious lobbying efforts after a House technicality was raised over potential future taxes on solar panels, despite the bill containing no tax increases.

The SC Club for Growth supports ratepayers having choices and free market energy principles that encourage competition. While the bill was not perfect, and the question of whether retail net metering is a subsidy or not is still being debated, the vote was a clear defeat for consumer freedom.

The preferred vote was “aye” to final passage. Unfortunately, the House failed to pass the bill by a vote of 61-44, as a two-thirds majority was required.

16. Superintendent of Education – May 1, 2018. S. 27. Passage of Bill. Vote # H1321.

S. 27 was a constitutional amendment that would have changed the Superintendent of Education from an elected position to a cabinet position with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Under such a scenario, the Superintendent of Education would have been directly accountable to the governor and would, presumably, share a common vision with respect to education in South Carolina.

The SC Club for Growth has long advocated for the appointment of constitutional officers by the governor and supported the passage of S. 27.

The preferred vote was “aye” to passage. Fortunately, the House voted to pass the bill by a vote of 83-26.

17. Unconstitutional Grab Bag – October 3, 2018. S. 1043. To Override the Veto. Vote #H1550.

The South Carolina constitution states that “every act or resolution having the force of law shall relate to but one subject, and that shall be expressed in the title.” By requiring each bill to address only one subject, members of the public and general assembly are able to reasonably infer the bill’s contents. The official name of S1043 is the “SC Abandoned Buildings and Revitalization Act.” Had S1023 only addressed unoccupied structures and their revival, we may have supported it. However, S1043 includes sections that created new tax credits for certain businesses, tax credit extensions for others, and addressed a number of other topics.

As Governor Henry McMaster rightly wrote in his veto message, “the myriad of provisions housed in the Act do not meet the one subject rule, and thus the Act is unconstitutional.” The SC Club for Growth concurs with the Governor. The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor’s veto by a vote of 112-4.

18. Private Theater Pork – October 3, 2018. H. 4950. To Override Veto 14. Vote #H1565.

Veto 14 sought to eliminate \$500,000 of taxpayer funded pork to the SC Children’s Theater, a nonprofit private entity. While the theater may be a worthy cause, it is not a core function of government and should fund its own mission.

The SC Club for Growth opposes taxpayer funding for private entities and supported the Governor’s veto.

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor’s veto by a vote of 93-25.

19. Sheltered from Scrutiny – October 3, 2018. H4950. To Override Veto 26. Vote #H1576.

The budget submitted to Governor McMaster included \$4.5M for a “Tourism, Sales & Marketing, [and] Sports Marketing Grant Program.” These funds, as the Governor stated in his veto message, lacked “disclosure of explanation, justification, description, purpose, location or amount.” The Governor further explained that members of his cabinet had not

asked for these funds, didn't know who submitted them to the budget, or how the funds are supposed to be used.

The SC Club for Growth believes all funding should be debated through the normal appropriations process, be capable of standing on its own merit, and open to public inspection. Instead, this bucket of cash was “void of necessary transparency.”

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor's veto by a vote of 99-13.

20. Overfunding Government – October 3, 2018. H. 4950. To Override Veto 27. Vote #H1577.

Veto 27 would have eliminated \$4 million in funding to “Locate SC,” a division of the Department of Commerce that advertises private commercial real estate in the state, but whose duties are already met by the private sector. In its original funding request, Locate SC asked for “only” \$4M from the legislature. However, the General Assembly – in addition to the money vetoed by Governor McMaster, provided Locate SC with \$7M in funding.

The SC Club for Growth opposes government programs such as Locate SC that duplicate private sector products and would prefer the program be defunded completely. When redundant programs like Locate SC, remain we are doubly opposed to overfunding them.

The preferred vote was to sustain the veto by voting “nay” to overriding. Unfortunately, the House voted to override the Governor's veto by a vote of 89-28.